

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON PRESENTS  
AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT  
The White House, Presidential Hall  
January 16, 2001**

**Today, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers Present Awards for Excellence in Microenterprise Development.** The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Microenterprise Development reflect an on-going commitment by the Federal Government to advance the role of microenterprise in expanding economic opportunities for all Americans, especially low-income workers, women and minorities who often lack access to traditional sources of credit. The awards are administered by the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund of the U.S. Department of Treasury. The fund, signed into law by President Clinton in 1994, has certified over 400 Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to date. It also has provided over \$427 million to match investments in CDFIs and to encourage traditional financial institutions to increase lending opportunities in under-served markets.

The awards were an outgrowth of the First Lady's work on microcredit over the past 15 years and her participation at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995. It was there that the U.S. government made a commitment to improve microcredit opportunities, and soon after Mrs. Clinton announced the creation of the awards as part of that effort.

In keeping with the U.S. commitment in Beijing, the President directed the Treasury Department to establish the Presidential Awards to draw attention to the important role and success of microenterprise development in the domestic economy. The awards, first presented in January 1997, are given in different categories to reflect the diverse goals, purposes and activities of microenterprise organizations.

**This Year's Awardees (And Some of Their Clients' Stories) Are:**

**Center for Economic Options.** The Center for Economic Options (CEO) of Charleston, WVA, is being honored for Excellence in Program Innovation. CEO provides a comprehensive set of business support services to economically distressed West Virginia residents, particularly women, and was selected because of its success in developing strategies to meet the unique needs of microentrepreneurs who live in isolated rural communities. CEO targets customers who want to participate in the market economy but have little history of gainful employment, few employment opportunities, or unrealized entrepreneurial potential. Key to the program's success is a series of sectoral networks – groups of small rural businesses that cooperatively access training and marketing services – created by CEO to support their customers' endeavors.

➤ ***Client Profile: Charlotte Chandler, Honey of an Herb Farm***

Charlotte Chandler started with a small stone herb garden, when in 1994 she learned about CEO's new Appalachian Flower Network. She attended the first meeting and has since become an active network member with a successful business, Honey of an Herb Farm, a three-and-a-half acre farm in Roane County, West Virginia. Through network training

provided by CEO, she has learned production, business development, and marketing skills. Originally, Ms. Chandler had feared that her rural location would limit customer traffic. However, Ms. Chandler says that CEO's comprehensive support has been the key to her ability to start and grow her very successful business. "One of the most important things that the Center has given me is encouragement," states Ms. Chandler, "Every time I lost faith in myself, someone from the Center was there to encourage and help me. I couldn't have done it without that."

**Ms. Foundation for Women.** The Ms. Foundation for Women of New York, NY, was selected for a Presidential Award for Excellence in Public or Private Support for Microenterprise Development, because of its long-term commitment to the microenterprise development field. Through an integrated, comprehensive set of initiatives, including the direct training of women in microenterprise development, a Peer-to-Peer Assistance program for the sharing of expertise among some microenterprise development organizations, and the dissemination of practitioner lessons, the Foundation has been an effective supporter and promoter of microenterprise. The Foundation's Collaborative Fund for Women's Economic Development has created partnerships among foundations, corporations, and individuals to support microenterprise development organizations (MDOs) across the country, and provides seed money to MDOs to experiment with new program strategies.

- ***Client Profile: Acre Family Day Care Corporation, Lowell, Massachusetts and Marea Washington, Family Day Care Business Owner.*** The Acre Family Day Care Corporation (Acre), based in Lowell, MA, provides training to Spanish-speaking residents on how to start child care businesses in their homes. Over the past 12 years, more than 250 child care providers have graduated from the Acre training program. The Ms. Foundation began funding the fledgling Acre in 1991 with a \$150,000 grant from the Collaborative Fund, which lead to new resources that Acre needed to transform itself from a pilot project into the full-fledged, bilingual organization it is today.

Marea Washington, 27, is one of Acre's graduates. As a single mother, she is the sole supporter of her three children and spent three years on welfare after her second child was born. When her third child was just two weeks old, Marea enrolled in Acre's 12-week Family Child Care and Entrepreneur training program. She became a licensed child care provider in April 1998, and her business has experienced a steady increase in revenue. Now, Marea, like many other Acre graduates, has signed up for its new Individual Development Accounts program, which will help her save for a down payment on a house. The purchase of a house will enable Marea to begin caring for children with physical disabilities.

**Partners for the Common Good 2000 (PCG 2000).** PCG 2000, of San Antonio, TX, was selected to receive a Program Innovation award because its unique limited partnership model demonstrates a new type of vehicle through which investor capital can be raised to support microenterprise. PCG, a partnership of nearly 100 religious organizations devoted to innovative economic development strategies, makes low-interest loans and deposits to support microenterprise organizations and credit unions engaged in microenterprise lending and low-income housing. PCG is the first group to organize a private sector venture capital vehicle to attract and manage investments in microenterprise. PCG's services have worked to benefit

women and minorities, creating jobs and increasing the wages of low-income people, and leveraging private investment.

➤ ***Customer Profile: The Esperanza Peace and Justice Center***

Established in 1987, the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center is a San Antonio, TX, city-wide community-based organization working for social justice and cultural enrichment through programming in education and the arts. It used a low-interest loan from PCG 2000 to acquire a building in downtown San Antonio. Esperanza's *MujerArtes* program gives low-income Mexican-American women the opportunity to build incomes by selling their hand-made clay crafts. This cooperative model recognizes that women are often heads of households in need of employment, and that women usually play a preeminent role in passing art and culture on to future generations. The *MujerArtes* program includes an intensive training component for up to 20 participants who commit to 20 hours of class time each week over a two-year period. The training is offered by an artist-in-residence, who is joined by community leaders, scholars, and other Latina women, who also facilitate in-depth discussions on economics, history, culture and race. The participating women sell their work through the Esperanza Center, and a percentage of the proceeds of the sale of the women's artwork is reinvested in the *MujerArtes* Cooperative.

**The Women's Initiative for Self Employment.** The Women's Initiative for Self Employment (WI) of San Francisco, CA, is being honored for Excellence in Enhancing Entrepreneurial Skills and as an outstanding model for providing comprehensive bilingual microenterprise development training, consulting and financial services to low and very low-income women in the San Francisco Bay Area. To date, thousands of women have received training and technical assistance services and assistance in starting or expanding businesses from WI, which offers its core curriculum in both English and Spanish. WI offers entrepreneurial training programs, and on-going business development services, such as business plan writing, seminars, one-time workshops, and business financing to graduates of its entrepreneurial training program.

➤ ***Client Profile: Danielle Franklin, Danielle's Touch, Skin & Body Care.*** Seven years ago, Danielle Franklin was suddenly widowed, left alone without any resources, and with a two-year old child. In 1996, while on public assistance, she began coming to Women's Initiative (WI) to gain focus and the technical skills to improve her business development. She also obtained WI financing to relocate her business to a more lucrative part of town. Today, her cosmetics business is booming, and she is able to support her family without outside help. But this success would not have occurred without the support, both technical and financial, that WI provided as Ms. Franklin had no outside resources at the time she approached them. Now, in addition to running her business, Ms. Franklin volunteers her time at WI and helps run mentoring and training sessions.

**Women's Opportunity Resource Center.** Women's Opportunity Resource Center (WORC) of Philadelphia, PA, was selected to receive a Presidential Award for Excellence in Poverty Alleviation for its success in providing targeted and innovative services to help many low-income and unemployed individuals start microenterprises. With a mission of promoting social and economic self-sufficiency for disadvantaged women and their families, WORC serves women and men by helping them build assets while strengthening basic life skills and business expertise. WORC has been very successful in helping its customers start businesses – over 90

percent of WORC's customers are low-income individuals and nearly 60 percent have household incomes of less than \$20,000.

- ***Client Profile: Nancy Santana, Nancy Santana Cleaning and Maintenance, Inc.*** In 1996, Nancy Santana was on welfare – a single parent with three young children, one born with a disability. She knew she had to make a change, and went to WORC to take up self-employment through their unique entrepreneurial training. Invoking her long experience in cleaning and maintenance, she was able to start her own cleaning business, and was so successful that today she is no longer dependent on welfare, and has 22 employees, many of whom were once on assistance, and some who are disabled. WORC was critical to helping her identify contracts and financing for her business at a time when she had no ability to leverage these resources on her own.

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***NOTE TO MEDIA: Digital photos of today's event will be available through the U.S. Department of Treasury. Please contact Deborah Smith at [SmithD@cdfi.treas.gov](mailto:SmithD@cdfi.treas.gov) for more information.***